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Rev. Mr. Harris's
D I S C O U R S E
BEFORE
THE HUMANE SOCIETY.



A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE HUMANE SOCIETY

OF THE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,

JUNE 10, 1806.

—:~:—

BY THADDEUS MASON HARRIS,
MINISTER OF THE CHURCH IN DORCHESTER.

—:~:—

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Boston :

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—
1806.

At a semiannual Meeting of the Humane Society, June 10, 1806,

VOTED,—That SAMUEL ELIOT, Esq. the Rev. Mr. McKEAN, and Deacon MORRILL, be a Committee to wait upon the Rev. Mr. THADDEUS M. HARRIS, and thank him for his ingenious Discourse this day delivered before the Society, and request a copy thereof for the press.

True Copy. Attest, EDWARD GRAY, Rec. Sec'y. pro tem.

Dorchester, June 12, 1806.

GENTLEMEN,

I gratefully acknowledge the honor conferred on me by the Humane Society in their appointment to deliver the Discourse, which I yield to their request for publication ;

And am, with much respect,

Your friend and humble Servant,

T. M. HARRIS.

A DISCOURSE.

AT the request of the Humane Society, on an occasion peculiarly interesting, I rise to plead a cause, which needs only to be fairly represented in order to be generously supported. With regard to the effect of my humble endeavors I need feel no diffidence, for it is impossible to conceive any appeal more likely to excite your tender sympathy, or call into exercise your active beneficence, than that which is now submitted to your attention.

As the theme of my discourse I select the fourth verse of the third chapter of the Gospel according to Mark.

MARK III. 4.

IS IT LAWFUL TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH DAYS, OR TO DO EVIL; TO SAVE LIFE, OR TO KILL?

WITH this retort did JESUS silence the cavils and disconcert the insidious designs of the Pharisees, who sought to charge him with a profanation of the Sabbath in healing a man with a withered hand. He vindicated himself by asserting the superior excellence of moral virtue to ceremonial duties, assuring his accusers that, acts of mercy must not be neglect-

ed, though the performance of them should interfere with the most sacred positive institutions. He informed them, particularly, that the Sabbath was appointed for the advantage of man, and that therefore to hurt men by means of a pretended observance of it, was directly to counteract its end.

The Deity had long before declared that he required mercy and not sacrifice.*

No man can be profitable to God ; but he who is wise may be profitable to himself, and he who is humane and beneficent may be profitable to others.

“ To do evil,” in the sense of the text, is to be unkind or injurious to our fellow creatures.

Alas ! that in any such a disposition should be found ! Human life is so full of cares and troubles, and man is so feeble and helpless, that, deprived of the sympathy and assistance of others, he must feel all the disadvantages of neglect and the wretchedness of destitution. If, besides this, he meets with injury, and is not only deserted by those who should help and comfort, but oppressed by the overbearing and attacked by the cruel, his complaints must be aggravated and his sufferings increased.

We may blame the reluctant and censure the injurious ; but what should be our opinion of those, who, though they inflict not evil, yet “ imagine a mischievous device,” and endeavour to prevent the good which the charitable would confer ? Such were the malevolent Pharisees. They watched Jesus with jealous eyes, to see whether he would exert his mi-

* Hosca vi. 6.

raculous kindness in behalf of a poor sufferer on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him of a violation of its sanctity ; and were “filled with madness” when he had conferred the benefit.

I. TO DO EVIL at any time is a breach of the laws of humanity and the laws of GOD ; but to do evil on the Sabbath day, when every good affection should be called into exercise, would discover base depravity. “Do they not err who devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.”

II. Our obligations TO DO GOOD arise from the very condition of our *nature* ; and hence the discharge of them is emphatically styled HUMANITY. They are dictated, also, by the principles of *reason*, and enjoined by the requirements of *religion*.

The least observation will shew us, that, as social beings, we are mutually dependent on each other ; that none are so exalted in station, or rich in possession, as to be independent of others ; and none so humble in condition, or destitute in circumstances, but they may perform many deeds, as well as receive many favors, of assistance and kindness.

From the Christian dispensation these social and relative duties receive high sanction ; while in the example of our blessed Lord they are exhibited by the most pleasing illustration, and recommended in the most impressive manner.

As *men*, then, and as *Christians*, we are bound to do good to all as we have opportunity, and by every mean in our power relieve the distress, supply the necessities, and advance the welfare of all around us.

III. TO KILL, is an act of violence and cruelty; but TO SAVE LIFE, though the public offices of religion are interrupted for the purpose, is not only lawful, but commendable; not only kind to man, but approved of GOD.

To kill, did I say? are there then in the human frame dispositions hostile to human existence? Does man ever assault and slay his brother man? If an individual has committed such outrage, can it be supposed that he would find associates in the work of death? Will numbers combine, armed with the implements of destruction, to wage a direful contest? Alas! fell revenge has slain thousands; and insatiable ambition, the pride of power, and the lust of conquest, have at times taught those hands which should sustain the weak and relieve the helpless, to plunder and fight and destroy tens of thousands. Indeed the history of mankind, from the earliest ages, is little else than a narrative of fierce contentions and desolating wars! Even *now* nation is rising up against nation; and every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. The mind saddens at the contemplation, and we turn shuddering from the scenes of carnage to rejoice that in *these* regions of peace, remote from the contests which make Europe one vast aceldama, we can cultivate those arts, and encourage those institutions, whose design is to alleviate the sufferings, meliorate the condition, and increase the happiness of man.

IV. TO SAVE LIFE, is a primary duty, enjoined by the concurrent dictates of humanity, reason, and religion.

Every man should nourish and cherish his own life, which, under all the inconveniences he feels or troubles he may meet, must be unspeakably valuable and dear. With solicitous readiness should he exert himself in the preservation of the lives of others ; and be active to afford rescue, if, by some sad accident a fellow being be involved in imminent danger. Then to ransom a life from destruction, with all the ardor of loving kindness, and every exercise of tender mercy, is one of the most commendable methods of doing good.

Where the benevolent intentions or exertions of an individual are insufficient, or might be rendered more effectual by the co-operation of others, it is very desirable that, either by mutual consent or express agreement, combined assistance should be afforded.

Upon this principle have been established those charitable institutions which comprize and use the means of many.

Among the plans of this kind which the benevolent have devised and the bountiful carried into effect, *that*, whose anniversary we now celebrate, stands high in estimation. Other charitable associations have for their principal object the relief of the necessitous. Their liberality assits such as are reduced by calamity or oppressed by misfortune ; and their chief expectation and highest ambition are, by well directed exertions, to alleviate the sufferings of the mortal condition. The HUMANE SOCIETY has for its aim THE RESTORATION OF LIFE ITSELF, on which all other charities, and opportunities, and comforts depend.

If to furnish lodging for the houseless wanderer be hospitable and kind ; how considerate is that benevolence which ereets on the desolate coast, for the shipwrecked mariner, exhausted with fatigue, drenched with the waves, and overcome with the inclemency of the weather, “ a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ? ”

To the former benefactor is presented the thanks of the stranger that he took in ; on the latter descends “ the blessing of him who was ready to perish.”

If to provide a home for the hapless orphan, be bounty well applied ; what is the charity of those who restore to his own house him, whose wife but for such timely succour had been a disconsolate widow, and whose children would have unexpectedly become most miserable orphans ?

If to sooth the sorrows of the afflicted, supply the wants of the indigent, visit the chambers of the sick, and close with weeping tenderness the eye-lids of the dying, be offices of kind attention and sympathetic regard ; how great a favour do they confer who rescue (perhaps at the imminent hazard of their own lives) from untimely death, and replace in all the privileges of life and health and usefulness, those for whom the shroud was spread and the grave was ready ?

Let it not be supposed that this is an invidious comparison. Far be it from me, my friends, to discourage your compassion for the afflicted, to withdraw your support from the infirm, to lessen your attention to the aged, or delay your visits to the sick. God forbid that any thing I have suggested should diminish

the sympathy which feels so freely for the numerous class of sufferers who find relief from your kindness and receive assistance from your bounty ! “ GOD forbid that what is meant to excite charity should create a jealousy of interest, or an interference of claims among Institutions which have one common object in view, the succour of distress, the alleviation of human misery in whatever shape it appears !” I have not the most distant intention of detracting from the necessity or importance of other charitable institutions. No ! Theirs be all the merit which disinterested benevolence deserves, all the encouragement which ardent philanthropy can offer, all the happy effect which active generosity intends, and all the recompence which the GOD of love delights to bestow on those who are the almoners of his bounty and the imitators of his goodness ! My intention only was to show that he who saves a soul from death, who rescues a fellow creature from untimely dissolution, and preserves a *life* important to the individual, endeared to his connexions, useful to the community, and incalculably valuable in reference to eternity, PERFORMS A DEED OF MATCHLESS CONSEQUENCE.

Thus to interpose in circumstances most critical and alarming, is the express intention and effort of the Humane Society. The annual reports which are published, fully evince the importance and usefulness of this Institution, and recommend it to the continual encouragement of the benevolent and liberal. To these records I refer for satisfactory proof that much good has been done. You will there read of several, who, to all appearance, had fallen victims to premature

death, by a timely and generous interposition snatched from destruction. You will imagine the exquisite emotions felt by disconsolate relatives and friends on the indications of returning life. You will participate the transports of joy expressed and interchanged with the son who was lost and found again, and the father who was apprehended to be dead but afterwards restored to life. You will find those, who were thus almost miraculously recovered, undertaking with new assiduity, the employments and duties of their station ; engaged for the commercial emolument or naval defence of their country ; comforting and assisting their relatives and friends ; and improving, as we devoutly hope, their prolonged probation in preparation for eternity.

As you peruse the interesting details, with tears of joy you will thank God for the discovery which led to the resuscitative art, by which he has allowed men in some degree to share in his own special prerogative. While you regret that some cases were unsuccessful, you will be glad that all which humanity could devise was attempted with alacrity, and that every effort which medical skill has directed was tried with perseverance. You will experience unalloyed satisfaction in every instance of success. You will feel more than ever disposed to encourage every future attempt. You will look forward with enlivened hope to what may yet be done. And you will *now*, with cheerful liberality, contribute to the means and the success of an Institution so humane in its purposes and so salutary in its effects.

Finally. Let us all be ready to every good work ; and never grow weary in well doing. Let us use all

means for the preservation of our own lives, and willingly and promptly do all in our power to preserve and make happy the lives of others.

To the arrests of death, indeed, all must at length submit; and no humane attentions, or skilful efforts can provide a ransom, or procure a discharge. Of this solemn truth we are daily reminded. It is now pathetically repeated by yon funeral knell, which announces the obsequies of our venerable and worthy Secretary ;* an early, active, and important member of this Society.

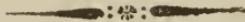
His name stands conspicuous in “the records of HUMANITY” on earth, and by VIRTUE and PIETY has been inserted in “the book of life” in heaven. We loved him for his goodness, we honored him for his virtues, we respected him for his integrity, we prized him for his services, and that we now weep is that the intercourse of benevolence is interrupted, not that it is closed. For, though “we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, yet GOD hath devised means by which his banished shall not be expelled from him;”† “The operation of HIM who raised up JESUS from the dead,” shall be effectual to resuscitate our mortal bodies, to disappoint death of his supposed conquest, and forever destroy his power. Then may we all, with the ransomed of the Lord, triumphantly shout, “thanks be to GOD, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ !” AMEN !

* JOHN AVERY, Esq. whose interment was immediately after the delivery of the discourse.

† 2 Samuel xiv. 14.



A P P E N D I X.



THE LIFE BOAT.

A Poem.

—*•*—
BY A MEMBER OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY.
—*•*—

The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me,

Job xxix. 13.

TO THE
PRESIDENT,
THE VICE PRESIDENTS,
AND TO
THE TRUSTEES
OF THE
Massachusetts Humane Society,
THIS POEM
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

THE LIFE BOAT.

A POEM.

Yet PROVIDENCE, that EVER WAKING EYE,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope. THOMPSON.

ARGUMENT.

Exordium—South Shields noticed—The Boat described—Appeal to Humanity in behalf of designated exposed Situations—Shipwrecks described—Ice Islands and loss of the Jupiter noticed—Eulogium on Humanity—Evening at Sea—View of Isle of Sables—Conclusion.

TO useful arts our homages we pay,
On MERCY'S ALTARS grateful tributes lay.

Shields ! thou hast seen, amidst the doubtful strife,
Thy first invention save the precious life !
When murky clouds the face of heaven deform,
The LIFE BOAT joyous, triumph o'er the storm.

The *curvy keel*, of downward convex sweep,
On broken waves shall still the balance keep ;
In doubled leaves, along the moulded waist,
With art elusive, lighter *cork* is placed ;
While *copper-lamina* o'er this extends
A polish'd surface, closing at the bends ;
Staunched, and double-bank'd, the *thwarts* are five,
While *iron thole pins* bid the rowers strive.
Ten shorten'd oars in circled *graumets* play,
On quick emergence traverse either way ;
A longer oar, amid the billowy whelm,
Gives to the *Steersman's* hand a steadier helm :

At either end the Boat complying steers,
Heads the strong sea, nor fronted danger fears.*

Let now, *Humanity*, like gifts display
Along the shores of *Massachusetts Bay* ;
Exult, when *Greathead's* blest invention saves,
While breaks the *Londoner*—or roar the *Graves*.
Where *Great Nahant* uprears his sea wreath'd head,
Or bays of *Ipswich* broader basons spread,
Or where *Plumb Island* hears the frequent voice
Of ship-wreck'd seamen—be the better choice ;
'Tis equal—unregarded be the Muse,
So may the pausing mind, judicious, choose.
Where *Scituate's* cliffs, mid elemental strife,
Lift their bold heads, preserve the sinking life ;
Or where *Cohasset's* castled rocks emerge,
Redeem the victim from the whelming surge.

Extend thy just regards, with fond relief,
Where *Marshfield* terminates in *ledgy reef* ;
So when the barque, at winter's shorten'd day,
For *Plymouth's* leeward haven bears away,
The stranded mariner, his fears increas'd,
By sleety tempest, from the bleak *north-east*,
Shall see, directed by the dauntless brave,
The *Life Boat* buoyant o'er the baffled wave,
Within, where *Gurnet*, or where *Sayquish* shew,
Dread *sunken islands*—breaking on the view.
E'en now, the wreck'd *Hibernia's*† sighs complain,
Where the long beach advances from the main.
Or onward seek the breasted *Clayey Pounds*,
Where, with *prophetic voice*, the deep resounds ;
Nor unavailing, haply, hints like these,
Where *Brant Point* stretches to expanding seas.

* See Willich's Domestic Encyclopedia, article *Boat*.

† Ship *Hibernia*, outward bound from Boston, was lost on Plymouth Beach, January, 1805.

Scenes of distress, that boreal rigours bring,
 Say, shall the pensive Muse digressive sing?
 Dismantled barques, yon whiten'd cliffs disclose,
 Remain the beacons of disastrous woes.

Lo! hapless *Brown*!* whom cloudless skies beguile,
 Unmoors at morn, mid winter's treacherous smile,
 On faithless seas at eve adversely tost,
 Mourns his fond hopes, by frowning fortune cross'd.
 Presageful murmurs sigh along the shores,
 With threat'ning voice the rising tempest roars;
 Lone birds, returning, rest their wearied wing;
 Forewarn'd of woes, to whistling cordage cling;
 The thoughtful seaman views the changeful clouds
 With silent gaze—alone ascends the shrouds:
 Along the deck the fearful rumour steals;
 The *Steersman* oft the creaking rudder wheels;
 The musing pilot, lonely, seeks the prow;
 While the rough boatswain calls, with sullen brow.

With dire commotion swelling ocean heaves,
 With ruthless grasp the scatter'd spoil receives;
 The shivering sailors crowd the parted deck,
 While *Death* and *Terror* triumph o'er the wreck.

The dauntless Chief, by mighty griefs oppress'd,
 To whelming surges yields his manly chest,
 While dying Comrades fall along the strand,
 Bewilder'd, wanders mid the pathless sand;
 No friendly roof—no light's glad beam appears,
 No glowing hearth dissolves his *freezing tears*;
 Alone he sinks, amid the drifted snows,
 While the keen north wind unrelenting blows.

So manly *Farrell*—near my native home,
 Thy fortune bade thee, like Ulysses, roam,
 For thee rude winter smooth'd the stormy wave,
 Serene the skies—nor dubious omens gave.

* The *Brutus*, *Ulysses* and *Volusia*, outward bound Ships from Salem, were wrecked on Cape Cod, February, 1803.

For Indies freighted, drest in streamers gay,
 By favouring breezes wafted on your way,
 Too falsely fair ! ere evening veils the skies,
 Dash'd on the shore, thy scatter'd vessel lies !
 Uproars the deep, the sullen surges scowl,
 The rocks re-bellow, and the sleet winds howl.

While yonder beach, which glowing fires illumine,
 Shews friendly succours mid terrific gloom ;
Heart-piercing sea shrieks load the troubled air,
 While dying seamen yield to chill despair :
 Now fainter cries with sad forebodings fill
 The list'ning ear awhile, then, "*all is still.*"
 See dauntless strangers mount the riven deck,
 Bear the chill'd victim from the silent wreck ;
 YOUNG—who alone survives the piteous doom,
 That sunk his shipmates in one common tomb,
 Buoy'd by the rope, as backward billows part,
 Feels the warm life-pulse swell his grateful heart. §

The lone Commander—gloomy perils past,
 By *Hope* supported, climbs the naked mast ;
 The faithful *Picture*, † pledge of manly bloom,
 That fears the threat'ning of oblivious doom,
 Borne to his breast, with mantling life-blood warm,
 Survives for friendship—lives beyond the storm.
 In strength of years, from smiling prospects torn,
 " By strangers honor'd, and whom strangers mourn,"
 Wreck'd on yon shelvy beach, here *Farrell* lies,
 Far from his native clime, his kindred ties.

Where *icy islands* stretch along the pole,
 Stupendous scenes appal the human soul !
 Like continents they seem, by *Hecle* hurl'd,
 Avulsive fragments of the polar world.

† A miniature picture of Capt. Farrell, found in his waistcoat. He had ascended the mast, and when found, his breast was still warm.

§ See the account of this shipwreck annexed to the Anniversary Discourse, delivered before the Humane Society, June, 1805.

Onward they move, in huge chaotic piles,
And threaten terror to Azores' Isles ;
The tepid airs of tropic regions fill
With humid vapour, and with *icy chill*.

Late, there, with London's freight, intrepid *Law**
These dread phenomena unwelcome saw :
High o'er the mast the boundless fields impend,
Grind the ribb'd timbers, massive anchors bend,
Wedge the bold prow, the seamy planks dispart,
While icy horrors rive the seaman's heart.

Now blank despair each tearful eye bedims,
The Life Boat launches—providently swims ;
More favour'd ye, whom milder fortunes bless,
What chosen pencil shall your joys express,
When first appear'd—or sail—or native coast ?
“ He best can paint them, who can feel them most.”

Blest be the deeds by *Powars*§ humanely done,
Who bore the helpless strangers *one by one* :
Behold yon *skiff*—and hear the mother's sighs,
The father's sorrow—lispings infant's cries :
See, while the famish'd group for blessings call,
The *cruise* and *barrel* yield repast for all.

Confiding still, of Providence the care,
Ye miserable hope, ye fortunate beware.

Ye blood-stain'd Despots—scourges of the globe,
Abash'd, before HUMANITY disrobe ;
Her pure *Medallions*, stamp'd in *Virtue's* mint,
Survive the legends *Glory* shall imprint ;
Meeds incorruptible, to *merit* given,
Plead the blest “ *well done*” of approving HEAVEN.

Borne on the vernal season's softer gales,
Yon gallant ship unfurls her pinion'd sails ;

* See an account of the loss of the ship *Jupiter*, Capt. *Law*, on her passage from London to New York, 1805.

§ Part of the crew and passengers (in two boats) were met with and relieved by fishermen from *Marblehead*.

Sooth'd by the stellar host, the sailor's song
 Propitious airs invokes, the still night long ;
 Meekly, the paly moon her milder ray
 Sheds, and the breamy waves reflective play ;
 Unfelt, the rapid current's devious force
 Withdraws the vessel from her midway course.
 Sudden chill mist envelopes all the skies ;
 Lone *Isle of Sables'* foggy vapours rise ;
 Instant the surge infuriate force assumes,
 And whelms the riches of a thousand looms.
 The pensive merchant, sunk in gloomy thought,
 Sees all his buried treasures vainly sought.

High o'er the desert strand, the beacon'd pole
 Invites to amities, that cheer the soul.
 Such are the blest pursuits of virtuous fame,
 Reflecting lustre on her injur'd name ;
 For *glory's* votaries gorgeous wreaths be twin'd,
 For wiser *Wentworth*, "*love of human kind.*"

Speed my fond verse ; thy venturous theme untri'd,
 Live with the LIFE BOAT, float along the tide.

Massachusetts, April, 1806.

MARBLEHEAD, July 3, 1805.

To SAMUEL PARKMAN, Esq.

Sir,

THE scattered situation of the people saved from the long boat of the ship *Jupiter*, on their arrival at this port, and the vessels which brought them having sailed before I received your request, rendered delay in compliance therewith unavoidable—shall enclose a list of the skippers' and vessels' names as far as I have been able to collect them. The circumstances under which they were first received on board the fishermen, being generally considered the most interesting, as they strikingly develop the character of this useful class of citizens, will be sketched as briefly as possible.

Skipper William Powar of schooner *Eleanor* first discovered, and received on board, the entire crew of the long boat, consisting of thirty nine, men, women and children. The extreme debility of the women and children, and a part of the men rendered them incapable of getting on board without assistance, to effect which, he immediately slung himself with a rope, got over the quarter, and thus lifted them all on board. Just as he had finished, the schooner *Plough Boy*, Archibald S. Dennis, skipper, observing the boat, bore down, and as soon as informed of the circumstances offered to take half of them. While making this division, the schooner *Minerva*, John Powar (brother to William) skipper, hove in sight, and on signal bore down; when informed of the fact, directed them to make an equal part for him. Those circumstances, which demonstrate so fully the ready benevolence of the skippers, I conceived ought not to be omitted; a disposition (I am peculiarly happy to find) manifested, with but one exception, on all the numerous but necessary changes of situation from one vessel to another, and the utmost cheerfulness in imparting their provisions, in many cases highly necessary, particularly in respect to William Powar, who had a few days before taking up this boat's crew,

given one eighth of his whole stock to a brig, which he met, bound from England to Halifax, in extreme distress. An act of Skipper John Powar deserves the most honourable record ; finding his stock of provisions inadequate to the full supply of his own crew, and those he had taken on board, he allowed his crew, while his famished passengers received a full supply, without communicating to them the circumstances. There is another, and the most numerous part, (the crew) who have heartily cooperated in the benevolence of the skippers ; but who cannot be noticed by any corporate body.

Does not the cause of humanity require, as a future stimulus, an indemnification for those, whose circumstances are sensibly depressed by this exertion ? But this I mention with deference for your more correct decision. If I succeed in collecting the list, will forward it immediately ; in the interim am very respectfully, your obedient, humble servant,

WILLIAM REED.



BOSTON, JANUARY 23, 1806.

To the Members of the Honourable Humane Society.

Gentlemen,

WE, the subscribers, being fully sensible of the many useful improvements made by your humane institution for the preservation of the lives of our fellow creatures, and the protection of our property, beg leave to solicit your attention to a part of our coast, where many of our friends have lost their lives, and many valuable ships are annually lost ; viz. the coast above alluded to, is that from the Gurnet light house at the entrance of Plymouth (northward) to Branch's Point in Marshfield, the distance of six miles, where no inhabitant resides, and we are sorry to say, no provision made for our fellow creatures who are so unfortunate as to be shipwrecked on that coast ;—

we, the the subscribers, therefore beg the attention of your honourable Society to consider the necessity of building one or more houses ; in our opinion there should be at least two. At the same time, if it is agreeable to the Society, we, the subscribers, would be happy to join you in your humane institution, being, as above said, fully sensible of its usefulness and necessity.

Your obedient servants,

WILLIAM KEMPTON,
JACOB WESTON,
JUDAH ALDEN,
SAMUEL A FRAIZER.

At a meeting of the Trustees, Feb. 3, 1806, Voted, That said communication be committed to Dr. Aaron Dexter, Rev. Dr. Eliot and Mr. Elisha Sigourney, to consider the subject of said letter ; and said committee are authorized, if they should find it expedient, to erect one or more huts pointed out in said letter with all convenient speed.

JOHN AVERY, *Secretary.*

QUINCY, JAN. 29, 1806.

To the Corresponding Secretary of the Humane Society at Boston.

ON the 6th day of this month, my son, of ten years old, with other boys, was sliding on the mill pond, and he broke through the ice where the water was between seven and eight feet deep ; the other boys immediately gave the alarm, and the neighbours ran to the place and found him to be about two rods from the shore. He had then been down and come up the second time, and they immediately threw him a rail, which he got hold on ; but the ice between him and the shore was too

weak to bear, and too strong to be broken by a man when swimming, and they were obliged to break the ice from the shore to where he was with rails and stones. But before this could be done, the boy was so much overcome by his own exertions and chilled by the cold, that his countenance changed, and he let the rail go and gradually sunk out of sight. When the ice was broken, two attempts were made to recover the body, but the danger of getting under the ice, and the difficulty of getting along among the cakes of ice, obliged those, who made the attempts, to return to the shore, when Mr. Benjamin Page took a pole that had a hook on the end of it in his hand, and went into the water, and with great difficulty got near to the rail, and by feeling after the body with his pole, he had the good fortune to stick the hook into the boy's great coat, and with uncommon exertions dragged the body to the shore after it had been in the water at least eight minutes from the time he first broke in, and two from the time he sunk last. The boy was then taken up, and carried to the house of Mr. Micajah Adams (who gave all the assistance in his power) and had his clothes stripped off; he was put into warm blankets, yet no signs of life were then to be seen; but by keeping his body warm, and continuing to rub his arms and legs with salt, in about ten minutes he was observed to gape and catch his breath, and gradually recovered, and in about twenty four hours he could stand alone, and is now nearly as well as ever he was.

If the established rules of the Humane Society will allow Mr. Page any reward for the service, which he rendered to humanity on this occasion, it is my sincere wish that he should have it.

I am, with respect, your humble servant,

NOAH CURTIS.

Dear Sir,

The above account of the recovery of a fine boy, in my neighbourhood, by a Mr. Page of this town (with the excep-

tion of not having placed in so strong a point of view, the exertions of Mr. Page, and the extreme hazard of losing his life) is, without doubt, strictly true. The parent of the child is a selectman of the town, and a very honest, respectable man. The person, who rescued the lad, is a very industrious young mechanic. Your most humble servant,

J. BARRETT.



WISCASSET, June 5, 1806.

Dear Sir,

THE following relation, I think deserving the notice of the Humane Society ; and doubt not that they will order some suitable mark of commendation for the persons, who, in providence, were instrumental, at the hazard of their own lives, in rescuing two of their fellow men from the jaws of death.

On Monday, the 26th of May last, as Messrs. *Joseph Boynton*, *James Handley*, and *Martin Coffin* were passing down Sheepscut river from this town to Boothbay, in a light sail boat, in beating against a strong easterly breeze, they were unfortunately upset, about 8 o'clock in the evening. They held by the boat, though more than a foot under water, until the tide had carried them down the river five or six miles, when their cries for assistance, at about midnight, alarmed Mr. *Ebenezer Rowe*, junr. who lives near the banks of the river in Georgetown. He immediately ran to the house of Mr. *Shubael Seley*, his nearest neighbour, and awoke him from sleep. They were convinced there were people in distress in the river, though unable to discover them. Rowe had no boat, and Seley had only a small punt or skiff, of a size less than the common canoe, scarcely sufficient to transport three persons in smooth water. But this circumstance did not discourage them. They put off in this small boat, though in their own opinion at the time, and in the

judgment of others since, they were in the most imminent danger. For there was considerable wind, and the waves unusually high.* Directed by the groans and cries of the persons clinging to the boat, they shaped their course; and at the distance of three quarters of a mile from the shore came up with the unhappy sufferers. Twenty minutes after, probably, would have been too late for the safety of either of them. Handley, who was the least exhausted, with some difficulty they took into the skiff. The other two, Boynton and Coffin, they kept by the sides of their little boat; rowing or paddling with one hand, and supporting the persons in the water with the other. In this situation, they held up Boynton and Coffin until they reached the shore of the outermost of the Five Islands, (so called) in Sheepscut river, which are uninhabited. The breakers were high and sufficiently powerful to destroy persons in full strength, without great caution and activity. It is considered very remarkable that the skiff was not immediately filled with water or dashed to pieces upon the rocks. Add to this, the banks of the river are of very difficult ascent; almost perpendicular. Handley was in some measure able to help himself. He climbed up a few feet among the rocks and held by some bushes. Boynton and Coffin were taken up from the water as soon as possible; but not without great difficulty, being entirely exhausted, and apparently dead. But by unwearied exertions, Boynton was restored, so that he was able to speak in about three hours. In Coffin, no symptoms of life were discovered. Soon after the boat upset, he lost all courage, and was prevented from losing his hold, and sinking, by the alternate exertions of Boynton and Handley, until Rowe and Seley came to their relief. For some time before the boat came up, he had not spoken; yet his companions suppose, that at that period he was alive. Every thing was done on their part to preserve him. But after getting to the island, upon examination it was found he was gone beyond recovery. His body was brought up to this town, and decently interred on the Wednesday following.

* This was near the mouth of the river, where it is nearly three miles over.

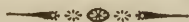
Whether we consider the circumstances of their preserving their hold of the boat for so long a time, of their cries arousing a man from sleep at the distance of more than half a mile, or of their reaching the island in so small a boat, exposed to the violence of the waves, the events are of that kind, for which we cannot account, without having recourse to a particular Providence.

The resolute and successful exertions of Rowe and Seley are certainly entitled to the highest praise ; and their conduct is recommended to the notice of the Humane Society, whose benevolent object it is to encourage and reward such attempts to preserve the life of man.

With sentiments of personal consideration and attachment,
I am yours, &c.

ALDEN BRADFORD.

*Hon. WILLIAM SPOONER, Corresponding Secretary of
the Humane Society, Boston.*



Premiums adjudged from June 1805, to June 1806.

Daniel Lock for saving the life of Mr. Nuttage	- - \$4
Hendrick Harret for taking up a child in danger of drowning	- - - - - 2
Joel Conant for saving a child of Mr. Thomas Lillie	- 5
Cyrus Thomas for his exertions in saving the life of Stephen Spear	- - - - - 3
Henry Dunnells for a similar exertion of humanity	- 3
Dodrick Hendrick for his care of the body of a dead man, &c.	3
Stephen Twist and John Sickles for their exertions in saving the life of John Langley	- - - 8
The Captains of Marblehead schooners who took up the people in the Jupiter's <i>long boat</i> , each a piece of plate	80
Leonard Brooks for his exertions in saving a boy	- 2
To R. Farrar for saving the life of a man who fell over- board from the brig Pallas	- - - - 7

\$117—

	Brought over	117
Benjamin Page for his signal exertions in saving the life of a son of Mr. Noah Curtis	- - - -	10
J. Dunnels for taking up a negro	- - - -	5
Moses Gardiner for assisting in getting one Christie out of the water	- - - - - - - -	2
William Coleman for saving the life of Edmund Soper		5
Samuel James for saving the life of a child that fell down a well above 30 feet to the water, and that was 12 feet under water	- - - - - - - -	10
Thomas Harriden and Robert Morrison, \$10, each, and Thomas Annibal \$5, for going off in a boat, and saving the life of a person who was perishing upon a raft which had floated away from the South Bridge, in a dark evening of the month of May	- - - -	25
Briant and Lincoln for their exertions in saving five persons who were in a fishing-boat that was sinking	- - - -	16
Francis Robbins for preserving a child from drowning	- - - -	3
Charles O'Neal for saving Benjamin Brazier from drowning	- - - - - - - -	2
Rowe and Seley for their extraordinary services	- - - -	40
Boynton and Handley for their endeavours to save Martin Coffin, \$5 each	- - - - - - - -	10

\$245

Expenses of the Society.

Semi-annual meeting	\$7 10
Mr. Sprague's account for printing Mr. Gray's sermon, &c.	55
Mr. Benjamin Russell's account for advertising meetings for a number of years	16
Account for binding in marble several of Mr. Gray's discourses	1 80
Messenger	35
Building several huts on the islands in Boston harbour, agreeably to the following vote	232 58

\$347 48

At a Meeting of the Humane Society, December 2, 1805—

Voted, That Doctor Aaron Dexter, James Scott, Esq. and the Treasurer be a Committee to examine into the state of the Huts in the Harbour of Boston, and to furnish them with such articles as are necessary for the relief of ship-wrecked seamen ; and to erect a Hut on Lovell's Island, if they shall find it practicable this season ; and to make such repairs as they shall think expedient.

An extract from the records of said Society.

JOHN AVERY, *Secretary.*

—*•*—

FUNDS—THE PROPERTY OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY.

Certificates of United States	} \$1442 17	
6 per cent. stock,		
Deduct principal paid	426 11	\$1016 6
	<hr/> \$1016 6	
Ditto 3 per cent.		708 83
Ditto 8 per cent.		800
Massachusetts State notes		3068 64
Union Bank stock		1800
West Boston bridge, 2 shares		417 17
Malden bridge fund		694 58
		<hr/> \$8503 28

WE, the subscribers, appointed a Committee, by the Humane Society of Massachusetts, at their meeting, June, 1805, to examine the accounts of Rev. JOHN ELIOT, Treasurer of said Society, find all the articles in his accounts vouched, the same right cast, and the evidence of the property above mentioned.

December 15, 1805.

SAMUEL PARKMAN,
JOHN HANCOCK.

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